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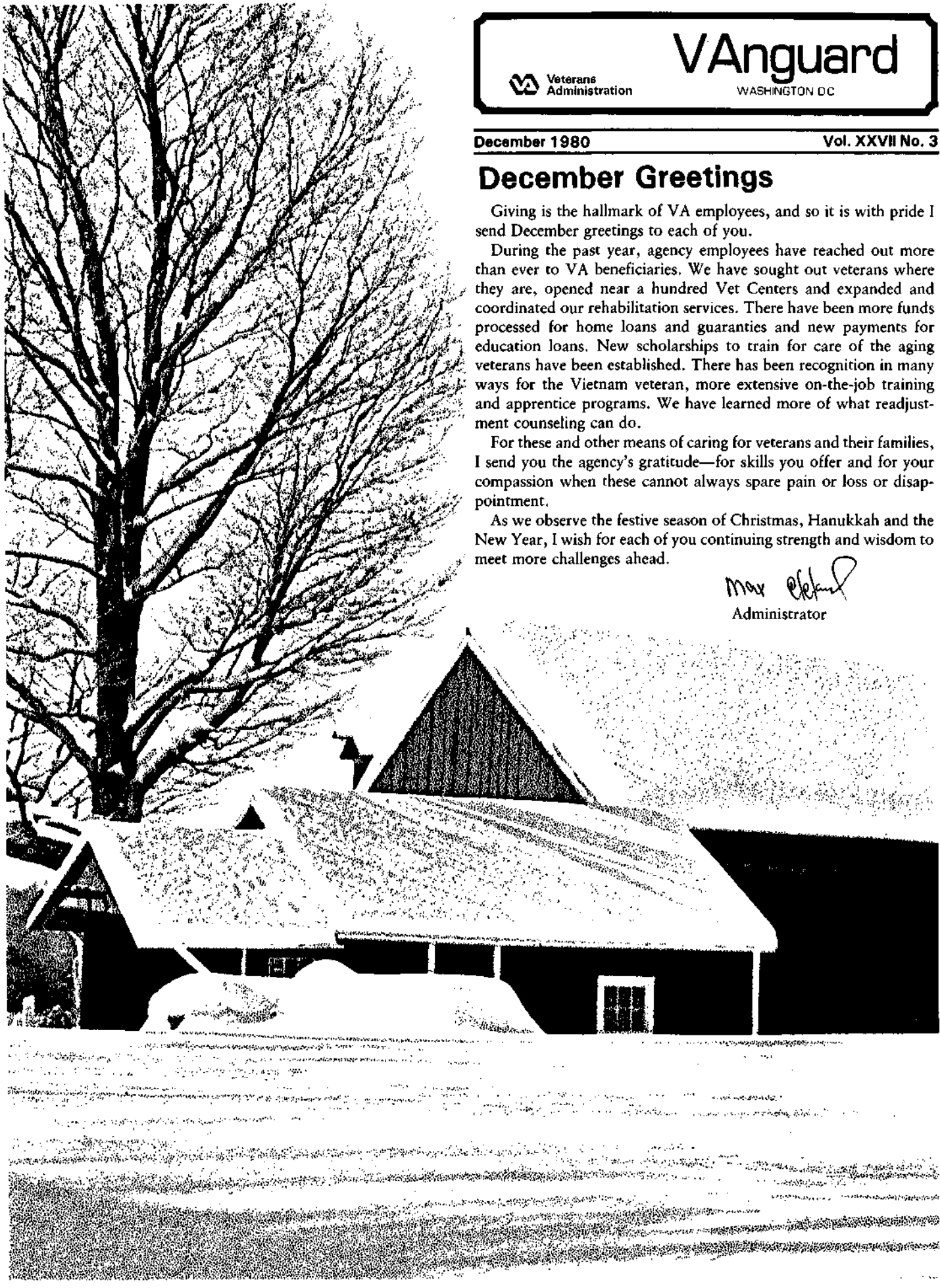
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December Greetings

Giving is the hallmark of VA employees, and so it is with pride I send December greetings to each of you.

During the past year, agency employees have reached out more than ever to VA beneficiaries. We have sought out veterans where they are, opened near a hundred Vet Centers and expanded and coordinated our rehabilitation services. There have been more funds processed for home loans and guaranties and new payments for education loans. New scholarships to train for care of the aging veterans have been established. There has been recognition in many ways for the Vietnam veteran, more extensive on-the-job training and apprentice programs. We have learned more of what readjustment counseling can do.

For these and other means of caring for veterans and their families, I send you the agency's gratitude—for skills you offer and for your compassion when these cannot always spare pain or loss or disappointment.

As we observe the festive season of Christmas, Hanukkah and the New Year, I wish for each of you continuing strength and wisdom to meet more challenges ahead.

Max Eklund
Administrator

Ferguson Steps Up

The status of VA's Nursing Service took a big leap upward recently with the elevation of Director Vernice Ferguson, R.N., to the new position of deputy assistant chief medical director for nursing programs. Since July of this year, Ferguson has served as director of VA's Nursing Service, which employs nearly 60,000.

CMD Dr. Donald Custis said the appointment, placing Nursing Service on a par with other major professional services, "reflects the growing complexity and professionalism of the nursing role in providing integrated health care."

Citing challenges to the management of nursing, Dr. Custis noted that the advent of specialized medical services has posed a greater demand for RNs, and rapid technological advances have made the entire realm of nursing more complex.

Ferguson has also been named president-elect of the American Academy of Nursing. The Academy was established in 1973 under the aegis of the American Nurses' Association. Thirty-six charter fellows were designated by the ANA Board of Directors. Presently, there are a total of 366 fellows of whom six are VA nurses. The Academy will limit membership to 500.

Along with her other duties, Ferguson will also serve a three-year term on the newly created National Commission



Ferguson speaks at a seminar on "Building for Nursing in the 80s" at Battle Creek VAMC.

on Nursing. This 29-member commission has been established as a joint project of the American Hospital Association and the Hospital Research and Educational Trust. Commissioners representing the major nursing, medical and health care organizations and related disciplines will conduct a comprehensive analysis of the nursing manpower resources and roles and functions of nurses in the context of the workplace. Four major and immediate areas of emphasis are nursing recruitment and retention, the status of nursing in management, nursing education requirements and nursing leadership. □

records of the 96th. But in 1939, Commandant Cates together with Mattingly, crusaded for the recognition and moved Congress to award the MOH. There was no next of kin to receive the medal, and authorities did not know where Stockham was buried. The medal has been displayed at the Smithsonian Institution and also at an American Legion post in St. Louis named for him. A destroyer was named after Stockham during World War II.

This year, at last, his name was found among records at Hollywood Cemetery. Paul

Angelo, supervisor of veterans affairs and registrar of veterans graves for Union County, saw it while searching records to make sure all graves were decorated there on Memorial Day. Stockham's portrait now hangs in Union County library of veterans' records, a gift from Administrator Cleland.

"Frank Stockham is unknown no more," Administrator Cleland told those gathered to honor the former Marine this fall. "Let us see this as a symbol of dreams," he said, "a dream of peace—and a dream of love." □



Above, CBD Dorothy Starbuck and Deputy Administrator Rufus Wilson meet with Mr. and Mrs. Gower and their daughter Kimberly —who captivated everybody.

Gower family feted. Douglas Gower visited Washington with his family for three days of events honoring the 10 Outstanding Handicapped Federal Employees of the Year. Gower, a veterans benefits counselor from Winston-Salem RO, was VA's nominee and one of the top 10 winners governmentwide. □

WWI Hero's Grave Saved from Obscurity

What was once an unmarked grave now bears the VA granite holder of a Medal of Honor winner, Gunnery Sgt. Fred William Stockham.

A belated recognition ceremony was held for Stockham at Hollywood Cemetery in Union, N.J., where Administrator Cleland, members of veterans organizations and a Marine honor guard saluted him and unveiled his portrait.

Orphaned as a child,



Union County Manager George Albanese helps unveil Stockham's portrait. Above, Administrator Cleland and Larry Lockhart, Union County director of human resources.

Stockham joined the Marine Corps in 1903, serving in China, the Philippines and Nicaragua over six years. In 1912, he re-enlisted and in 1918 went into World War I combat with the 96th company, Sixth Marine Regiment, against the Germans in Belleau Woods.

Here, while evacuating wounded comrades under artillery and mustard and phosgene gas attack, he noticed a Marine whose gas mask had been riddled by shrapnel. Stockham removed his own mask, placed it on the injured man, Barrett Mattingly, and carried him to safety. As he tried to assist others, Stockham collapsed and several days later he died. He had spent six hours in his last battle and joined in death some 90 percent of his company, killed in the same action.

Buried first in France, he was brought home in 1921, assigned to an Irvington, N. J., undertaker and buried in an unmarked grave made available by a friend.

The 96th's company commander, Lt. Clifton Cates, who later became Commandant of the Marine Corps, recommended Stockham for the nation's highest military award, the Medal of Honor. This recommendation was lost, with other

Disaster Efforts Cited

Some \$14,900 has been shared by 77 employees at Grand Island VAMC, together with the Administrator's Exceptional Service Award.

The awards were recommended by Administrator Cleland and approved by the Office of Personnel Management.

Courage recognized

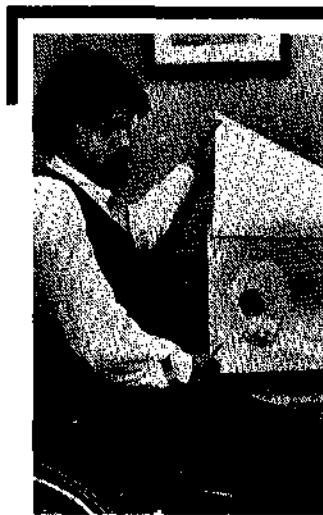
The awards were given in recognition of the courage and professional efforts of center employees during the series of tornadoes that struck the area on the evening of June 3.

In a congratulatory message, OPM Director Alan Campbell praised the Grand Island employees' "accomplishments in the face of adversity" and said "their work sets an example of dedication and professionalism for everyone in the federal career service."

The employees averted a potentially disastrous situation by moving all patients to the center of the building or the basement. Although \$1.2 million in damage was caused by the tornadoes at the center, there were no deaths or injuries.

A total of 96 Grand Island employees received letters of commendation for Director Richard Ledbetter, who retired in late August and stayed over for the ceremony honoring his staff. Midwest regional director Thomas Mullon presented the awards, representing Chief Medical Director Donald Custis.

□



Wesley Young explains CPR procedure.

VA Film Makers Win Emmy

Learning Resources Service at St. Louis VAMC recently won an Emmy from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for outstanding achievement in an industrial program. The award-winning show, "Medical Administration Service National Training Program," is a 16-part videotape series for employee education.

Nominees for an Emmy are judged by a blue ribbon panel of television experts in eight cities. Entries are judged on creativity, content and execution.

This series, which has been used to train some 17,000 MAS employees, has also received a VA Meritorious Service Award and a Distinguished Service Award by the Training Officers Conference. □

Old-time Prices

As part of VA's 50th Anniversary, Canteen Service sold 856,082 special items at 1930s prices—a savings to customers of \$279,549. These items included over 57,000 50-cent lunches, some 334,000 hot beverages at 5 cents, and more than 464,000 nickel cold drinks. □

Handicapped Employees Prepared to Help

At least two handicapped employees have joined the thousands of VA people trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Vietnam veteran Patrick O'Brien, claims adjuster at Buffalo VARO, learned CPR from the Buffalo VAMC nursing service. He was one of 32 nonmedical staffers who received CPR certification. O'Brien is a double-leg amputee.

Wesley Young, a paraplegic and a Central Office Administrative Service travel assistant, received training there as a CPR Basic Rescuer, early this year. He continued training at the Washington, D.C., VAMC, and qualified as a CPR instructor in September.

"Everyone should know CPR," says O'Brien. "I don't want to be just a bystander and not able to do anything to save a life." Far from that in many

ways, he enjoys fishing, swimming, camping and is an avid scuba diver and dirt bike advocate.

'I can jump down . . .'

Young, who became a paraplegic after a motorcycle accident in 1970, joined a CO class when invited by a fellow employee. "I can jump down on the floor right beside the victim. I don't have full muscle ability but can provide compressions and ventilations that are necessary. It's far better than nothing."

Young is vice president of his local chapter of National Spinal Cord Injured Foundation. He is enthusiastic about their program providing the newly injured with information about cure and care, transportation and architectural barriers of concern to the spinal cord injured. □



Instructor Thelma Lopez, R.N., reviews CPR skills with Patrick O'Brien.



Agent Orange Activities Gain Momentum

VA's investigation of Agent Orange has broadened its scope with the recent formation of several working groups.

The **Agent Orange Policy Coordinating Committee** was established to oversee all AO activities within the agency. Headed by General Counsel Guy McMichael, the group recommends policy and develops agency strategy for dealing with Agent Orange questions. Its nine members include the directors of Compensation and Pension Service, Veterans Assistance Service, Information Service, Studies and Analysis Service, as well as the Special Assistant to the CMD for Environmental Medicine.

A **Data Analysis Task Force** has been organized to examine ways in which VA's herbicide data base—especially the Agent

Orange Registry—can best be used. The task force is chaired by Dr. William Page, Biometrics Division chief, Reports and Statistics Service, Office of the Controller.

This seven-member group has special expertise in biostatistics and automated data processing, plus familiarity with existing VA computer "files." After reviewing the Agent Orange Registry, it will develop a data retrieval system to help describe some of the health problems being experienced by those vets enrolled in the registry. They are also working on a follow-up plan for reassuring veterans enrolled in the registry that VA will make every effort to maintain contact with them and keep them informed on Agent Orange.

Chloracne is a skin disorder

that has been widely recognized as the primary long-term medical problem linked to dioxin exposure. Unfortunately, it is not always easy to distinguish chloracne from other more common forms of acne. To overcome this problem, a **Chloracne Task Force** has been established, headed by Dr. Kenneth Halprin, physician at Miami VAMC.

This group of four distinguished dermatologists is designing a protocol for chloracne examinations. They are currently preparing educational materials on this subject for VA's environmental physicians. They are also identifying a larger group of about 20 dermatologists to serve as special consultants for diagnosing questionable chloracne cases, as well as for aiding in adjudication procedures.

The task force has another job: reviewing previously denied claims for skin conditions to check for possible misdiagnosis.

In addition to these working groups, VA has made several new efforts to inform and educate employees and the public on Agent Orange. A pamphlet called "Worried about Agent Orange?" was published

and sent to all VA stations for further distribution to concerned veterans. This pamphlet has been reprinted several times to fill demand.

VA is also producing two Agent Orange information films in videotape form. The first, called Agent Orange—A Search for Answers, is designed for public use and supplements the pamphlet. Copies will be distributed to all major VA health care facilities, outreach centers and regional offices. Copies will be made available to veterans organizations upon request. The second videotape, which is still being developed, will meet informational and training needs of environmental physicians and other VA medical personnel.

To provide the latest herbicide developments to VA medical staff, especially the environmental physicians, DM&S is in the process of preparing the Agent Orange Bulletin. This bulletin will be primarily for medical education purposes, and will discuss results of the most recent studies, programs and policy changes which affect Agent Orange activities of field staff. □

AO Programs: Who's Doing What?

So many committees and programs have been started to work on the Agent Orange puzzle that it's hard to keep track of them all. Here is a brief list of these groups and activities:

Outside VA

- **Interagency Work Group and its Scientific Panel**—composed of representatives from VA and other agencies. Advise the President on herbicide policy and coordinates all federal research efforts.
- **Major research by other organizations:** Birth Defects Study being done by the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta; Ranch Hand Study to be conducted by the Air Force; Agent Orange Registry of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology; Soft Tissue Sarcoma Study, also at AFIP.

Inside VA

- **AO Policy Coordinating Committee**—oversees all VA herbicide activities and recommends policy to the Administrator.
- **Advisory Committee on the Health-Related Effects of Herbicides**—advise the Administrator on a broad range of matters related to the Agent Orange issue.
- **Office of the Special Assistant to the CMD for Environmental Medicine** directs DM&S efforts. Advising the Special Assistant and working on specific projects: Data Analysis Task Force; Chloracne Task Force.
- **Major projects coordinated by the Special Assistant:** Agent Orange Registry; world literature analysis; epidemiological study.
- **Field Activities:** unique to each station; directed by Environmental Physicians who report back to the Special Assistant's office for information and guidance. □

Salmond Heads Office of Construction

William Salmond, a professional engineer and a long-time leader in VA's innovative hospital construction program, has been named assistant administrator for construction.

The 56-year-old Salmond, an Air Force veteran of World War II, has been serving as acting assistant administrator for construction since the retirement of Viggo Miller early this year.

Salmond has been with VA since 1962. Prior to that time he held positions in the construction industry and in the architect-engineering design field in New Jersey.

He is an engineering graduate of Lehigh University and he holds a master's degree in public administration from George

Washington University.

Salmond has played a key role in the conception and development of architectural, engineering and construction technologies which have brought

See Salmond page 7.



Salmond.



Administrator Cleland dedicates the cemetery. Standing alongside are cemetery director Ralph Church (left) and Deputy Chief Memorial Affairs Director Vincent Corrado.

Bourne Cemetery Opens

Some 3,000 people gathered at Bourne, Mass., recently to celebrate the opening of VA's newest national cemetery. Administrator Cleland unveiled the dedicatory plaque, which commemorates "all patriotic men and women who answered their country's call to service."

Speakers at the event included Rep. Margaret Heckler, member of the House Veterans Affairs Committee; Rep. Gerry Studds, congressman from the Cape Cod area; and Gen. Louis Wilson, former commandant of the Marine Corps and chairman of VA's Advisory Committee on Cemeteries and Memorials.

When completed, the cemetery will occupy 750 acres of land once part of Otis Air Force Base and Camp Edwards. It will be developed in stages. The first phase, now finished, provides space for some 9,000 gravesites, as well as an administration building, service complex, landscaped roads and walkways costing \$2 million. □



Part of the parade of colors at Bourne's dedication.

Another Reform Act Initiative

Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program

By Charles Clark

Assistant Administrator for Personnel

The Civil Service Reform Act calls upon the VA and other federal agencies to "conduct a continuing program for the recruitment of members of minorities . . . in a manner designed to eliminate underrepresentation of minorities in the various categories of Civil Service employment . . ."

To accomplish this goal, we must develop Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Programs as part of our Affirmative Action Plans. The primary goal of VA's effort under FEORP is the development of an effective recruitment program designed to attract minorities and women into applicant "pools" from which selections will be made.

The first step in developing FEORP plans is to determine where underrepresentation of women and minorities within various job categories of civil service employment may exist. Whether underrepresentation exists is determined by comparing the percentage of particular minority/sex group in a specific job category and the percentage of that same group in the civilian labor force, either nationally or locally. Underrepresentation exists when the federal employment percentage is less than the civilian labor force percentage.

Once the underrepresentation determinations have been made, a well balanced, diversified staffing program must be developed which will be used to meet FEORP objectives. We have many methods available to overcome underrepresentation. These include:

- On-site recruitment visits to minority communities, minority and women's organizations and educational institutions with large minority and female enrollments;
- Recruitment ads in national and local newspapers, periodicals, and magazines aimed at minority and female audiences;
- Identifying jobs requiring bilingual and bicultural capabilities and modified recruiting and selection processes for such jobs;
- Cooperative education agreements with educational institutions with large minority and female enrollments;
- Training (such as the Senior Executive Candidate Development Training Program), to prepare qualified members of minority/sex groups for higher level positions.

These are only some of the recruiting techniques which will be used. Specific recruitment strategies must be determined locally based on such factors as geographic location, turnover rates and the degree of underrepresentation.

A primary function of personnel responsible for FEORP will be to target vacancy announcements and other employment information at those sources most likely to provide candidates for employment. We believe that a planned, results-oriented approach to recruitment is the best method to achieve VA's goal of a fully representative work force. □

To See The Queen

One of VA's Medal of Honor employees, Frank Currey, who helped liberate the Dutch city of Maastricht during World War II, was a guest at the coronation of Princess Beatrix as queen of the Netherlands.

Currey, an employee of New York VARO, is assigned to Albany VAMC, as benefits officer.

Currey was a platoon leader with the 30th Infantry Division that helped free Maastricht in 1944. □

publications and reports

VA Writes About Aging

VA psychologists and physicians made major contributions to three new volumes on aging introduced in Montreal at the last American Psychological Association Convention.

"New Directions in Memory and Aging," published by Earlbaum Associates, 365 Broadway, Suite 112, Hillsdale, N.J. 07642. 572 pages. \$36.00.

This constitutes the proceedings of the George A. Talland Memorial Conference

and features the relevance of research on memory to counterpart research dealing with problems of aging. The papers focus attention of research psychologists on practical ways of treating problems of memory and aging, including counseling, skill training, memorization and ways people who have difficulty remembering can compensate.

Three of the five co-editors are VA people: Drs. Leonard Poon, Boston OPC; James Fozard, CO; and Laird Cer-

mack, Boston VAMC. Contributors from the VA include Drs. Marilyn Albert, Nelson Butters and Edith Kaplan, all of Boston VAMC; Richard Erickson, Seattle VAMC, and Lawrence Squire, San Diego VAMC, as well as the three editors.

"Aging in the 1980s," published by the American Psychological Association, 1200 17th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036. 638 pages. \$19.50.

Dr. Poon, editor-in-chief of this publication, was presented with the first copy by APA Executive Officer Michael Pallach. Other VA contributors included Drs. Marilyn Albert, Boston VAMC; Kenneth Davis and Richard Mohs, Bronx VAMC; Irvin Feinbert, New York VAMC; Judith Ford, Terry

See Aging page 7



Inspecting the new tree with SAW veteran Montgomery are, from left, Bob Durkee, VFW department quartermaster adjutant; Larry Longfellow, VFW department chaplain, and John Bunger, center director.

Montana's Oldest Veteran Leads Tree Dedication

A new tree has been added to the memorial grove at Fort Harrison VAM&ROC honoring the 1,069 from Montana that served in the Spanish American War.

Joining in the ceremony on his birthday was Joe Montgomery, 104 years old and sole surviving Montana SAW veteran. The tree was dedicated by Helena Veterans of Foreign Wars, who added it to those honoring Montana's four Medal of Honor recipients and others who served in various wars.

Most of the trees are spruce, and many have been established for years. They are visible to patients from their rooms and provide shade and an attractive place where ambulatory patients can walk in view of nearby mountains.

The grove is located near the center's grass parade ground and flagpole. It is named in honor of William Best, a 100 percent service-connected disabled World War II veteran, who serves as a nursing home unit volunteer. □

GI Bill, Voc-Rehab Amended

The "Veterans Rehabilitation and Education Amendments of 1980" makes major changes to several key VA programs. It provides a 10 percent increase in GI Bill educational allowances and a 17 percent increase in the living allowance for service-disabled veterans taking VA vocational rehabilitation training.

Title I of the measure contains many of the recommendations VA made to Congress for restructuring the agency's vocational rehabilitation program. For the first time, VA is specifically empowered to engage in job development and placement, ensuring that disabled veterans are not only employable but employed.

For seriously disabled vets who cannot hold a job, the program has been broadened to include those services necessary to enable them to reach maximum independence in daily living.

Under this new law, disabled veterans are entitled to 48 months of benefits and 12 years within which to complete training. Veterans with serious employment handicaps will be given liberal extensions of these dates, plus evaluations and services needed to bring them up to the level necessary to participate in training or an independent living program.

In this law, provision is made to allow VA to reimburse employers for certain necessary added costs in developing on-job training programs for disabled veterans.

Disabled veterans with remaining entitlement may elect to receive the higher GI Bill educational allowances, and still receive almost the full range of other vocational rehabilitation services. Title I also lists circumstances under which subsistence allowances will be limited or stopped, as in the case of veterans jailed for felonies.

Title II of the Amendments

See Programs page 8

Disabled People On the Air

Administrator Cleland will appear in a National Broadcasting Company documentary, "Our Largest Minority: The Disabled," being aired December 7. Interested viewers should check their local NBC station for time of broadcast.

Programing will include a computer training class for severely disabled with a 95 percent job placement record and a disco party with dancers in wheelchairs. Others to be interviewed include Judge Alan Farber, quadriplegic involved in the first grand jury investigation of illegal barriers, entertainers Ray Charles and Tony Orlando, baseball star Ray Campanella and others who are disabled themselves or who have a disabled family member. □



King.



Kent.

Roseburg Nurses on the Move

Ten percent or about 20 of the full-time nursing staff at Roseburg VAMC are graduates of upward mobility programs.

The employees have taken advantage of community college curriculums with funds from VA's Upward Mobility Program which is coordinated by the Office of Personnel Training Division.

'Wonderful opportunity'

Gerald Kent, whose wife and young children encouraged him to move ahead, and Doris King, who found upward mobility a "wonderful opportunity" after her children were grown and on their own, are graduates of the program.

King said she studied to become a graduate nurse after someone at the hospital saw an announcement about training as a registered nurse through "upward mobility, something I didn't know existed."

As a licensed practical nurse assigned to respiratory care, she continued VA nursing duties while picking up prerequisite credits at nearby Umpqua

Community College. She was able to plan a 9 month schedule toward completion of requirements for the R.N. Meanwhile, during school holidays and recesses, she worked as nurse practitioner in a unit where patient care was administered by nurses with a doctor on call.

King took her state boards this summer and has transferred to San Diego VAMC where she is assigned to a surgical unit.

Kent, who earned a nursing degree two years ago, now administers and directs care of 25 residents in a nursing home care mobile unit at Roseburg.

Under upward mobility, he worked out a two-year nursing program attending classes at the local community college and was graduated and passed his boards as an R.N. in 1978.

Recently he has been a leader in Roseburg's wellness program that encourages patients to exercise and eat properly.

Now Kent has set another goal. Again registered in college, he wants to complete the bachelor of science degree in nursing. □

VA Reacts to Disaster

After the first Mount St. Helens eruption, Austin DPC quickly produced and mailed some 2,400 notices to property owners with loans with the VA in the Seattle VARO area. Notices advised them they might be eligible for disaster benefits from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA's regional center set up several offices in Washington.

Additional advice was provided to about 30 who responded directly to the VA regional office.

Loan guaranty helps

One borrower with a VA guaranteed loan said her house in Kidd Valley was not damaged but terrifyingly near the "Red Zone," where mud flowed 20 feet deep and water and sewer connections were cut. Unable to bring herself to live in the dwelling again, she sought and received financial counseling from VA loan guaranty staff as to her options for liquidation of the property. Donald Austin, loan guaranty officer, inspected the house.

Tornado victims in Pennsylvania's Apollo and Allegheny Townships received clothing, food, small appliances and cash from Pittsburgh VAMC (Highland Drive) Employees Association. Members put on a three-day drive to help neighbors whose houses were destroyed.

Donations delivered

Thomas Gaughan, a medical center police officer, and Gilbert Hanan, respiratory therapist, headed a committee that spent an additional day loading donations into Hanan's van for transport to the needy families.

Again VA employees showed compassion when a fire struck the home of James Zandi, section supervisor in a computer programming division at Hines DPC. His wife, a 6-year-old daughter and a 14-year-old son died as a result of the fire. Five other children and Zandi received hospital care. Three

other children were not at home at the time.

VA employees contributed about \$4,500 to the Zandi family whose house was severely damaged. The DPC also set up a pantry collection and provided numerous boxes of foods and household goods to replace the almost total destruction of the family's belongings, joining with other friends, neighbors and local businesses to help their fellow employees. □

Aging from page 6

Jernigan and Leslie Zatz, Palo Alto VAMC; George Fein and Thomas Floyd, M.A., San Francisco VAMC; John Cerella, Boston VAOPC, and Dr. Fozard.

This book surveys aspects of psychological aging including stress and coping, learning and memory, clinical issues in mental health care, neuropsychological and psychopharmacological issues. It also presents findings regarding age differences in the measurement of brain potentials.

"Annual Review of Gerontology and Geriatrics Vol. I," published by Springer, 200 Park Ave. South, New York, New York 10003. 431 pages. \$21.95.

This volume includes seven (from among 21) contributions by VA authors.

They are Drs. Edwin Bierman, Seattle VAMC; John Rowe, Boston VAMC; Lissy Jarvik, Los Angeles (Brentwood) VAMC; Donna Cohen and Steven Harkins, Seattle VAMC; Terrance Hines, Boston VAOPC, and Dr. Fozard.

The APA convention also featured descriptions of clinical and research efforts described by VA psychologists from the agency's Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Centers at Boston, St. Louis and Sepulveda. □

Salmond continued from page 4

widespread acclaim to VA's large hospital construction program.

Among these are the application of an interstitial space concept for VA medical buildings which makes efficient use of spaces between floors for a variety of utility lines and conduits, advances in energy conser-

vation and the critical path method of scheduling for construction projects, first of its kind employed in the federal government.

As assistant administrator for construction, he is in charge of a program involving more than \$500 million in the current fiscal year. □

Exhibit Makes History



Flores holds oil painting by FAA artist Roy Gipson.

A hobby begun years ago by a VA community service specialist at the Veterans Assistance Center (VAC) in East Los Angeles has turned into a permanent historical exhibit honoring America's Mexican allies of World War II.

Gabriel Flores, now a vocational rehabilitation counselor at Los Angeles VARO, first heard of the exploits of the Mexican Air Force Fighter Squadron 201 from colleagues and visitors at the center.

His collection of artifacts, photos and memorabilia, can now be seen at the San Diego Space Museum's Historical Hall.

Fascinated as he learned about the 201st's participation in Philippine and Formosa air offensives, Flores began to collect information on these pilots credited with some 30,000

Japanese enemy casualties.

He wrote the National Archives, found he could order photographs of some of the squadron which included Lt. Mario Lopez Portillo, cousin of the President of Mexico. Thus began a search that yielded mission records, death notices, award certificates, documents from the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Library and Air Force, copies of records kept in Mexico City and correspondence with surviving pilots.

He acquired items telling of six pilots lost in combat; a ground crewman shot by a sniper; decorations for the unit including two Legion of Merit medals, 20 Air Medals, a Philippine Presidential Unit Citation and a complete roster of the 201st's men and officers — 148 items in all.

Flores found the Mexican Thunderbolt fighter pilots trained at Randolph Field, San Antonio, Tex., and Baker Field near Victoria, Tex. Overseas, their mission was to provide close air-ground support for American GIs fighting on Luzon and bomber strikes on Japanese-held Formosa.

Earlier this year, Flores loaned his collection for a Cinco de Mayo observance at West Los Angeles Federal Building where VARO offices are located.

So impressed were the viewers, many of whom did not know of Mexico's World War II fighter squadron handpicked from thousands of volunteers, that Flores began to look for permanent space that could be used to remind Americans of their debt to brave Mexicans. He approached the San Diego museum, and they agreed to display his collection.

"The fliers greatest reward," Flores reports, came after the war when millions traveled from remote Mexican villages to greet them as national heroes."

Flores has accepted an invitation he considers an honor—to attend the 1981 Grand Reunion of Squadron 201 next summer in Mexico City. □

Rehab, Education Now Separate Services

Vocational rehabilitation and counseling activities within VA have been given an added dimension.

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service was established October 1 as part of the Department of Veterans Benefits. These activities previously were part of DVB's Education and Rehabilitation Service.

Concurrently, counseling and rehabilitation activities at the regional offices were separated from the Veterans Services Division into a Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Division/Staff.

The change implements one of the recommendations made to the Administrator by the Agency Task Force on Rehabilitation, the General Accounting Office and the Office of Planning and Program Evaluation.

The Education Service will continue to monitor all other educational programs administered by the VA. Charles L. Dollarhide is the acting director of Education Service.

Dr. Norwood L. Williams was named acting director of the new Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling Service. □

Programs continued from page 6

authorizes the 10 percent GI Bill educational assistance allowance increase in two steps—the first 5 percent hike being effective Oct. 1, 1980, with the remainder effective Jan. 1, 1981. Title III lists a number of changes affecting the administration of VA education programs, and sanctions current VA practices concerning measurement of undergraduate course "seat time."

Veterans commencing programs of flight training on or after Oct. 1, 1980, would have the reimbursement rate reduced from the current 90 percent level

to 60 percent. Veterans, spouses, widows or widowers commencing correspondence training on or after Oct. 1, 1980, would have their reimbursement rate reduced from 90 percent to 70 percent.

Important cost-saving measures are authorized in Title VI, including the option to deduct by offset from VA benefits any money owed to the U.S. government (with procedural protection for the debtor). Disclosure of information to consumer reporting agencies is also permitted. □

VANGUARD

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Honors and Awards

Frank Marquardt, special assistant to the director at Brentwood VAMC, named executive director of the College Federal Council for Southern California.

Jerry Caplinger, laboratory animal technologist at Oklahoma City VAMC, selected as the Laboratory Animal Technician of the Year by the Oklahoma Branch of the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science.

Herb Doering, chief medical administration service at Hot Springs VAMC, selected Boss of the Year by the Mt. Rushmore Chapter of the National Secretaries Association.

Lillian Laggan, R.N., nursing service chief at Tuscaloosa VAMC, selected "Woman of the Year" by the local chapter of the American Business Woman's Association. □